

**REMARKS OF REPRESENTATIVE JEFF MURSAU, VICE-CHAIR,  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS, TO THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND ETHICS**

**2009 Assembly Bill 211  
County-Tribal Cooperative Law Enforcement Programs**

**April 21, 2009**

Chair Hebl and committee members, thank you for taking up 2009 Assembly Bill 211, relating to county-tribal cooperative law enforcement programs. The bill was introduced by the Joint Legislative Council, at the recommendation of the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations, for which I am the vice-chair.

For more than 20 years, the County-Tribal Cooperative Law Enforcement program has facilitated law enforcement in Indian country by encouraging cooperation between county sheriffs and tribal law enforcement. The program provides modest grants to fund projects jointly agreed to by the county and tribe. The grants have been used for purposes such as hiring additional officers to patrol the reservation or to serve as a liaison between the county and tribe, buying necessary equipment, training, or to address special problems such as drug use or gang activities.

The program has had many notable successes. Sheriffs and tribal police chiefs report that strong working relationships have developed in some cases, leading to cross-deputization of officers, joint dispatch, coordination of patrols, back-up of each others' officers, and other benefits. One of the greatest benefits of the program is regular communication between the county and tribe, which is a central feature of the program.

Of course, not all counties and tribes have been as successful. Some tribes have complained that they have not benefited from the program. In particular, they complain that the grants are paid to the county and the tribe never sees any money. Assembly Bill 211 responds to this concern by requiring that the joint program plan, which the county and tribe negotiate and submit to the Department of Justice, specify how the grant funds are to be divided between the county and the tribe and directing the DOJ to disburse the grant funds as specified in the plan.

This is a common sense approach to a problem that occasionally arises. It will have no real effect on the numerous programs that are working well but will help avert conflicts that can get in the way of cooperation.

I hope you will recommend Assembly Bill 211 for passage by the Assembly.

I would be happy to answer any question you may have. Also, David Lovell and Heidi Frechette, the Legislative Council staff assigned to the Special Committee, are here to help me answer questions.